

1 AN ACT concerning access to governmental services.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Access
5 to Governmental Services Act.

6 Section 5. Definitions.

7 "Equal access" means to be able to interact with a State
8 agency or constitutional office at a level equal to individuals
9 who do not have limited English proficiency.

10 "Limited English proficiency" means the inability to
11 adequately understand or express oneself in the spoken or
12 written English language.

13 "Oral language services" includes various methods to
14 provide verbal information and interpretations, such as staff
15 interpreters, bilingual staff, telephone interpreter programs,
16 and private interpreter programs.

17 "Important documents" means application or informational
18 materials, websites, notices, and complaint forms offered by
19 State agencies and constitutional officers, as defined by rule
20 by the appropriate State agency or constitutional officer.

21 "Important" documents" does not include applications and
22 examinations related to the licensure, certification, or
23 registration of businesses and professionals.

1 "Sufficient number of qualified bilingual persons in
2 public contact positions" means the number of qualified
3 bilingual persons required in order to provide the same level
4 of service to non-English-speaking persons as is available to
5 English-speaking persons seeking the same service from State
6 agencies or constitutional officers.

7 Section 10. Language access required.

8 (a) Each State agency and constitutional officer shall take
9 reasonable steps to provide equal access to the agency or
10 office for individuals with limited English proficiency.

11 (b) Reasonable steps to provide equal access include, but
12 are not limited to:

13 (1) Development and implementation of pilot programs
14 or phase-in implementation plans for having a sufficient
15 number of qualified bilingual persons in public contact
16 positions or as interpreters to assist persons in public
17 contact positions in providing oral language services to
18 individuals with limited English proficiency where there
19 is documented substantial need due to contact between a
20 State agency or constitutional officer and individuals
21 with limited English proficiency.

22 (2) Development and implementation of pilot programs
23 or phase-in implementation plans for translating important
24 documents ordinarily provided to the public into the
25 language spoken by any limited English proficient

1 population that constitutes at least 3% of the overall
2 population of the State as measured by the U.S. Census.

3 (c) Each State agency and constitutional officer shall
4 adopt rules regarding the requirements of this Section not more
5 than 6 months after the date that this Act takes effect, or as
6 soon thereafter as possible.

7 (d) The Department of Human Rights shall implement a
8 process to address disputes arising under this Act, including,
9 but not limited to, disputes concerning the interpretation of
10 "important documents" and "sufficient number of qualified
11 bilingual persons in public contact positions", not more than 6
12 months after the date that this Act takes effect, or as soon
13 thereafter as possible.